

August 24, 2018

To the Honorable Members of
The Illinois Senate,
100th General Assembly:

Today I veto Senate Bill 2546 from the 100th General Assembly, which amends the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Act (the "Act") by declaring that the term "student" excludes essentially all graduate students and instead includes graduate assistants within the definition of "educational employee" or "employee" as used in this Act.

Under this legislation, graduate students who are research assistants that primarily perform duties that involve research or who are primarily performing pre-professional duties would no longer be deemed students under the Act. By treating these graduate students as educational employees or employees, instead of as students, they would be permitted to unionize as a bargaining unit at State educational institutions.

Classifying them as employees would change the relationship between graduate students and professors, which is at the core of graduate education, from cooperative and mentoring to transactional. This change overlooks the pre-professional, career-building nature of the training that graduate research assistant and other graduate assistant positions provide. Treating graduate assistants as employees and not students ignores the personal nature of the graduate educational process, where individual students make choices in their best educational and career interests.

Therefore, pursuant to Section 9(b) of Article IV of the Illinois Constitution of 1970, I hereby return Senate Bill 2546, entitled "AN ACT concerning education," with the forgoing objections, vetoed in its entirety.

Sincerely,

Bruce Rauner
GOVERNOR

